INTRODUCTION

The Program Evaluation Sub-Committee (PESC) at MUN is the evaluation oversight committee for the undergraduate medical education program. PESC is responsible for evaluating:

- Curriculum content
- Curriculum delivery
- Instructor performance
- Student assessment
- Student performance

In 2005, a new course evaluation strategy was implemented to ensure that all courses were evaluated by students and the results were reviewed by course chairs and distributed to instructors.

Study Purpose: To describe the implemented evaluation strategy and to examine its impact on improving course ratings from 2006-2011.

METHODS

Course review process

Students evaluate courses online by indicating their level of agreement with statements regarding the course design and instruction using a 5-point Likert scale. The overall course rating is the mean rating of all statements regarding the course as a whole.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
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Three criteria have been established defining when an intensive review of a course may be necessary:

1. a mean rating is below 3.5/5.0
2. a decrease in a course rating of >0.5/5.0
3. a committee-identified critical course issue

The formal protocol for reviewing student course evaluations is shown in Figure 1.

Analysis

Basic Science of Medicine (BSM) and Integrative Study of Disease (ISD) courses which are taught during the pre-clerkship years were included in this analysis (23 courses in total).

Changes in course ratings and the percentage of courses either above or below the 3.5 benchmark were calculated from 2006-2011.

RESULTS

In the 2006/2007 academic year, 8 courses (61%) did not meet the minimum benchmark of 3.5 (Figure 2).

The ratings of all 8 courses increased in the 2008/2009 academic year and by 2010/2011, only 1 course out of the 8 was still below the minimum bench mark.

The course ratings of all 23 courses from 2008-2011 were significantly higher compared to the ratings in the 2006/2007 academic year (P<0.05).

CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation strategy implemented by PESC which includes continuous curricular quality improvement and a transparent process for course review can help improve course ratings, particularly for courses that receive poor course ratings.

The current study provides initial validation for the value of our approach to course evaluations in an undergraduate medical education program.